

Beat the Quake!

California Earthquake Preparedness

Steps to Take

EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS FOR SENIORS

PLAN

Major earthquakes can kill and injure thousands of people. Even moderate earthquakes can cause death, injury, and property damage. They also can seriously disrupt all of those things we have come to take for granted and to depend on for our well-being. Developing individual, family, and neighborhood earthquake plans can help you improve your chances of surviving an earthquake without injury or serious damage.

Plan for family, friends, and neighbors to check on each other after an earthquake. (Telephones may not be working, so this should be arranged between people who live near to one another.)

Maintain a list of your medications, allergies, and special equipment. Include the name, address, and telephone number of your doctor, pharmacist, a family member, clergyman, or special friend. Take this list with you if you must leave your home after an earthquake.

PREPARE

Falling objects pose one of the greatest hazards in an earthquake. Older people may not be as agile or as mobile as they once were, making it difficult or impossible to quickly get under a piece of heavy furniture such as a table or desk for protection. Therefore, it is very important to eliminate hazards in the home that could fall and cause injury. If you cannot do these things yourself, ask a friend or family member for assistance:

- ◆ Securely anchor any medical equipment, heavy appliances, bookcases, china cabinets, hanging plants, and other items.
- ◆ Place heavy objects on low shelves.
- ◆ Move beds away from windows.
- ◆ Make sure doorways, halls, and exits are clear so that you may exit safely.
- ◆ Add latches to cabinets and drawers to keep them from opening in an earthquake.

Keep a 72-hour supply of emergency food and water. Have a well-stocked first aid kit, flashlight and batteries, portable radio, and essential medications.

PROTECT

Know where to go for protection when shaking starts. Find a safe spot in each room: under a heavy piece of furniture like a desk or sturdy table, against inside walls, or under supported archways.

If you cannot reach a safe spot, sit down or stay sitting where you are until the shaking stops. Cover your head with your arms.

If outside, move to a safe spot away from buildings, overhead wires, and windows.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Many seniors have special needs. Taking the following actions will increase your chances of riding out an earthquake safely:

- ◆ If you use life support equipment, such as oxygen, have someone fasten the large tank securely to prevent it from falling over in an earthquake. If you use a wheelchair, walker, crutches, canes, or other types of mechanical walking aids, keep them near you at all times. If possible, have extra walking aids available in different locations throughout your home.
- ◆ Place a security light in each room. These lights plug into any electrical wall outlet and light up automatically if there is a loss of electricity. They will continue operating automatically for four to six hours, and you can turn them on and off by hand in an emergency.
- ◆ Have a whistle to signal for help in an emergency.
- ◆ If you use battery-operated equipment, store extra batteries and replace them annually.
- ◆ If your life support equipment requires electricity, buy an emergency generator.
- ◆ Have a smoke detector and fire alarm system installed. If you have difficulty hearing, install a system that has flashing strobe lights to get your attention. If you have a battery-operated detector, replace batteries annually.
- ◆ If you use a hearing aid, keep an extra supply of batteries with your emergency supplies. Remember to replace them annually.
- ◆ If you wear glasses, keep an extra pair with your emergency supplies.